(b) The process of right-sizing is a continuous exercise. Indian Railways has been restricting the intake of fresh manpower since the beginning of the last decade. The Staff strength has been reduced from 18.07 lakhs as on 31.3.91 to 15.45 lakhs as on 31.3.2001. If the present trend continues in the current decade, the staff strength would be further reduced to 11.8 lakhs by 2010.

Rail connection between Chennai Central and Chennai Egmore

391.SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Willl the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to connect chennai Central and Chennai Egmore by rail in order to facilitate easy traffic flow;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) to (c) Rail link alreday exists between Chennai Central and Chennai Egmore *via* Basin Bridge/Royapuram. However, a survey has also been conducted for an elevated direct link between Chennai Central and Chennai Egmore. It is found that the link is neither financially justifiable nor is it likely to reduce the inconvenience of any significant number of commuters.

ATMs at Railway Stations

392. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Willl the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to set up Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) for withdrawal of money, etc. at important railway stations;

(b) if so, whether any agreement has been entered into with any bank;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) to (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The names of the stations where Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) have been installed are Bhopal, Habibganj, Howrah, Mumbai Chatrapati Shivaji Terminus Nagpur, New Delhi and Pune. The Banks with whom agreement has been entered into are State Bank of India, HSBC, ICICI and Citi Bank.

(d) Does not arise.

Production of special bogies

†393. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are formulating any scheme to manufacture special type of bogies, keeping in view the security of passengers during accidents.

(b) if so, the kind of security that can be provided at the time of accident to passengers with the help of these bogies and the target fixed for providing facilities to passengers with the help of such bogies, alongwith the number of bogies to be made available; and

(c) the details of the steps taken by the Department in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Firstly, coach interiors and fitting will be modified to prevent injury to passengers during normal use and in case of accidents. Secondly, the coach body shall be redesigned to absorb major part of impact in case of serious accidents in non-passenger-carrying areas thereby, minimizing risk of serious injuries to passengers inside the coach.

Modification for improvement to the interiors have also been adopted for incorporating in new coaches and also for retrofitment in the existing coaches. Such modified coaches will be inducted gradually into the fleet as a continuous process. No target can be assigned for complete implementation of these modifications at this stage. Also development of crashworthy design of coach bodies is in a preliminay stage. It is not practicable to assign any target for induction of such coaches or number of coaches to be manufactured at this stage.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.